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History Department News

Department of History

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Spring 2016

# UNI History Department News, Spring 2016

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Greetings, one and all! We've been out of touch for a bit, so we're sending a short newsletter to update you on some of the changes in the department.

## UNI HISTORY ALUMNI FACEBOOK PAGE

There is now a Facebook page titled **UNI History Alumni**, featuring department news, events and odd bits of history. Check it out by visiting [bit.ly/UNIHistoryAlumni](http://bit.ly/UNIHistoryAlumni) and please send a request to join!

## SADLY MISSED



Professor **John Baskerville** died on March 3, 2015. For 22 years, he taught African American and U. S. History, among other classes at UNI. His passion was music, both writing about it and playing it in local bands. At the department's memorial in the Great Reading Room, many alumni spoke about his influence on them and the warm welcome students always

received in his office. The department has created a John Baskerville Award for student service and invited James Loewen to speak in his honor last February. His papers were donated to the University's Archives. The collection's online description includes a short biography: [library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/university-archives/john-baskerville-collection](http://library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/university-archives/john-baskerville-collection).

## RETIREMENTS



Long-time History instructor **Kenneth Lyftogt** retired at the end of the fall 2015 semester. With him departed a good bit of departmental history, since Ken had been associated with UNI since the 1970s and had served as a popular Humanities instructor almost that long. Lyftogt is a well-known scholar of nineteenth-century Iowa, especially its role in the Civil War. While enjoying

retirement, he's also at work on what is likely to be the major history of Iowa during the War Between the States.



Former department head **John Johnson** retired at the end of the spring 2016 semester. A reception honoring him was held on April 1, in Seerley's Great Reading Room. Johnson came to UNI from Clemson University in 1998 and served as department head until 2003.

After stepping down as head, he served as interim

dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences and has since continued an active career of teaching and writing. Asked what he will miss about UNI, Johnson indicated he will miss his colleagues and the chance to watch young people grow intellectually. But he's looking forward to spending more time with family and in pursuit of a variety of hobbies. He says, "I want to live life outside of the structure of the August-May academic calendar for the first time since that morning in 1951 when my mother planted my unsteady feet on the steps of the school bus." We wish him well at it.

## ARRIVALS

We've had several new faculty join us in the last several years. In case you missed them, they are:

**Dr. Fernando Calderón (Ph.D. University of Minnesota)**

**Dr. Leisl Carr-Childers (Ph.D. University of Nevada-Las Vegas)**

**Dr. Michael Childers (Ph.D. University of Nevada-Las Vegas)**



**Fernando Calderón** teaches courses on Latin America. Fernando comes from northern California; his research focuses on the urban guerrilla experience in Mexico, 1964-1982, and his publications include "Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico: Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964-1982"

which he co-edited with Adela Cedillo (2011). His second book project is tentatively titled "Contesting the State from the Ivory Tower: Student Power, Dirty War, and the Urban Guerrilla Experience in Mexico, 1970-1982." He teaches a popular seminar on the "Global Sixties." When not teaching or researching, Fernando spends many weekends visiting his wife Adela, who is completing her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



**Leisl Carr-Childers** is a scholar of the American West and coordinator of the Public History program's internships and courses. She specializes in combining public history with academic production through digital projects such as the Nevada Test Site Oral History Project and the Fortepan Iowa project.

Her first book, "The Size of the Risk: Histories of

Multiple Use in the Great Basin" (University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), has been described as "brilliant in concept and execution." It recently received the Western Writers' Spur Award for Contemporary Nonfiction. She is the proud partner of Mike and Bear the dog and an avid traveler.



**Michael Childers** specializes in US environmental history in a global context, specifically the history of outdoor recreation and sustainability. His first book, "Colorado Powder Keg: Ski Resorts and the Environmental Movement" (University of Kansas Press, 2012) examined the environmental impact

of Western U.S. ski resorts. Currently working on his second book on tourists in Yosemite National Park, it should surprise no one to learn that Mike is an enthusiastic skier and outdoorsman. In the warmer months, he and wife Leisl enjoy a variety of outdoor activities, especially those that involve dogs (as proud dog parents of Bear, a well intentioned yellow lab).



# University of Northern Iowa UNI HISTORY DEPARTMENT NEWS

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